Lt.-Col. C. H. Weston,
Three Years with the New Zealanders.

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CHAPTER I

TRAINING IN NEW ZEALAND

NEW ZEALAND, or Aoteâ-roa (The Long White Cloud), as it was called by the ancient Maori inhabitants, that fertile, beautiful country, lying in its loneliness in the Pacific Ocean some twelve hundred miles from huge Continental Australia, did not hesitate, after the outbreak of war, to take up its share of the Empire's burdens, and by August 29th, 1914, the Samoan Expeditionary Force, consisting entirely of New Zealand troops, had captured Samoa, the crown of Germany's possessions in the Southern Pacific. In October the main body of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force, with its first reinforcement, also sailed for Egypt. The main body comprised a Brigade of Infantry, with its accompanying Artillery, Engineers, Army Service Corps, etc., and four regiments of Mounted Infantry with their horses.

These no mean achievements for a country of something over a million inhabitants were rendered possible principally owing to the system of compulsory training which had been elaborated by Lord Kitchener and brought into operation in 1911. Major-General Sir Alexander Godley, K.C.M.G., was Commandant of the Forces, and had around him an efficient staff of Imperial and New Zealand officers and instructors, whose services were made available for Overseas campaigning. The organization for enrolling, equipping and training the Force was complete, and in three years since the commencement of the system a considerable number of the young men and boys of the Dominion had received some military education.

The continuity of the scheme was not broken by hostilities, and the reinforcements for the Expeditionary Force were trained apart from and in addition to the yearly quota of the colony's manhood becoming subject to the provisions of the Military Service Act.

As a cadet at my old school, Christ College (N.Z.), and later as a Volunteer, I had had some military training, but retired to the Reserve of my regiment (11th Taranaki Rifles) with the rank of Captain shortly before Lord Kitchener's scheme was introduced. However, officers with experience were required, and having in October sent in my name for active service, I was appointed to the Wellington Company of the 6th Reinforcements, of which the officers and N.C.O.'s were to report at Trentham Camp on March 15th, 1915.

Very wisely, when war broke out the New Zealand Defence Department instituted Refresher Courses in various parts of the dominion for officers and N.C.O.'s who had volunteered for Overseas service, or were taking the place of others that had gone, and I was able to attend such a camp at the Wanganui Racecourse in January, 1915. A jolly camp it was, in pleasant surroundings and beautiful weather. Major W. C. Morrison was in command, a New Zealand Staff-corps man, with South African experience. His syllabus was practically a condensed form of Lord Kitchener's training of his New Armies, although the latter's schedule did not reach New Zealand until the course was almost completed. The course exemplified the new military methods: organization was good, and all preparations possible were made beforehand---a striking contrast to some camps I had attended. War is like the law; battles, like cases, are won before they commence.

It must be admitted now, as experience has proved beyond doubt, that a man who has had some previous training more easily absorbs the military atmosphere than his fellow-citizen with none. People were prone to discount the value of the earlier training, but it stood many of us in good stead. It was difficult enough to adapt oneself to the new life, but it would have been infinitely harder, and taken longer, had one had no volunteer experience. The value of the system of Compulsory Training in this war has justified its existence.

The course was attended by a number of cadets, for whose military education full provision is made by the New Zealand Territorial scheme. Amongst the seniors was a patriotic officer, rather older than most of us, who had also come back from the Reserve in August; he brought an expensive motor-car into camp---a "Sunbeam," if I remember aright---and lodged it in one of the loose boxes. One day a little cadet N.C.O. had

been excused from parade, and, wandering by the shed, was tempted and fell. The spectacle of a perilous, exciting journey round the racecourse ending in a cannon off the outside rails of the straight, on to the fence in front of the grand-stand, was our share of the fun, in addition to the useful example of how a court-martial should be conducted.

The Regimental Camp, under Lieutenant-Colonel (then Major) Bellringer, on the banks of the Waiwakaiho River, gave one an opportunity of obtaining some practice in training men. There was little conception of how long the war would last, and a great number of the 900 men in camp hardly imagined they would eventually leave New Zealand in transports. I remember at that time receiving an answer from a public body, in which I held office, refusing to accept my proffered resignation on the ground that the war would be over in three months. Before the Regimental Camp broke up I left for Wellington, and lost my independence with the oath of allegiance.

One's subsequent experience has not shaken a belief that the training at Trentham was good, where at that time the reinforcements for all arms of the N.Z.E.F. were concentrated. The system employed was to train the officers, and a proportion of selected N.C.O.'s of the next reinforcement, as a squad by themselves for five weeks, and then hand over to them the men when they came into camp. Thus the Company officers were given sole charge of their own men subject to general supervision by the staff. There were four companies of infantry of six platoons, each of 50 men, A, B, C and D, which composed the reinforcements for the Auckland, Wellington, Canterbury and Otago Battalions respectively. The companies were quite separate, but it may be that it would have been better to have organized them as a battalion, in order to give the officers and N.C.O.'s a knowledge of the interior economy of that unit.

The five months spent there were very interesting, and one carried away the pleasantest recollection of the place. No doubt many of us looked forward with dread to the wet Trentham winter, understanding how dependent civilian life had made us on external comforts. The prospect of being cold and of getting wet was anything but cheerful, for, indeed, our very happiness depended on being warm and dry. However, the winter, bad as it was, passed quickly enough; afterwards it became a habit not to speculate beyond the next twenty-four hours; with such an uncertain tenure of life, it was of little use looking on the dark side of a future that one might never reach.

April 19th was a great day when the officers and N.C.O.'s of B Company turned out to meet the men they were going to train, and perhaps eventually to lead in action. I considered myself fortunate in the officers and N.C.O.'s that I had. We were a good team and pulled well together; I can only remember being obliged to disrate two N.C.O.'s till the time we joined the battalion at Lemnos in September. My Co. S.-M. Brodie, was an old Rifle Brigade Colour-Sergeant of ten years' service, and represented the best type of the N.C.O.'s of the old Regular Army. After resigning from the service, he had come out to New Zealand, and was green keeper to the Napier Golf Club when war broke out. He was a bachelor, and, I fancy, older than his "military age" of thirty-nine admitted; tactful to a degree, efficient, and, although as popular with his own company as with the other companies of the Reinforcement, yet a good disciplinarian. I became greatly attached to Brodie, and was very disappointed when we parted company on merging with the battalion, he going to the Wellington West Coast Company as Sergeant-Major. He did not live to see much fighting, as he was one of our few casualties on the Apex. He was killed by a shell that ricocheted into his dug-out in a deep trench. His body lay for the day in a blanket in the little cemetery on the hillside, and after dark we buried him. A brave soldier and a gentleman was Brodie.

My officers had made up their minds that at any rate the men of B Company should not complain of the welcome they received on coming into camp, and each N.C.O. was told off to take charge of so many men and to make their arrival easy for them. After they had been fitted out with their kit and had seen the last of their civilian clothing, they were paraded and divided up into six Platoons, as far as possible according to the localities in which they lived: Wellington (Lieutenants Hume and Marshall), Ruahine (Lieutenant Webber), West Coast (Lieutenant Tremewan), Hawkes Bay (Lieutenant Muir), and Taranaki (Lieutenant Scott). There were several old Regulars amongst them; one could easily distinguish them, if only by the way they stood at attention; the hall-mark was unmistakable. For the rest, we were from all classes, and, thanks to the real spirit of democracy that we breathe in New Zealand, were, but for our military ranks, all equal.

We kept together as a Reinforcement until the end of September, and every week an improvement in the Company might be observed. The training was confined to infantry drill, bayonet fighting, and musketry; the

latter including the Imperial course for recruits and trained men. Naturally, at that stage, there was no Lewis gun and bombing instruction.

As might be expected from volunteers, they possessed a keen desire to learn, and it was very noticeable how ready they were to receive suggestions. Give a people high standards---by suggestions couched in a way that appeals to them---the majority will attempt to reach them. To most of them the life was quite new, although there were amongst them several old Volunteers, in addition to the Regular soldiers. Of boys who had been through the Territorial Compulsory Training there were few, the average age being fairly high, about twenty-six years.

While the weather was warm we marched the Company down to the Hutt River every Wednesday and Saturday afternoons for a swim. In those days the washing and bathing' arrangements were very primitive compared with those existing now in the New Zealand camps.

Rapidly the winter months went by, and the time for our final leave approached. The camp was very crowded in July, but an outbreak of cerebro-spinal meningitis cleared it in a single night of all the troops except the 6th Reinforcement Infantry. One of my men, a Russian exile, contracted the dread disease, but eventually recovered, Gargle parades three times a day earned the reward of escaped infection.

While we were on leave there was a heavy flood in the Hutt valley, and our tents, pitched in a low-lying part of the camp, in some cases withstood the torrent, in others did not. I believe it was a brave sight, our calico houses sailing down stream in what seemed an attempt at orderly formation.

Leave over, we did our outpost and attack manoeuvres and then turned to our packing and final preparations for the transport.

A day or two before we were due to sail, His Excellency the Governor, the Earl of Liverpool, an old Rifle Brigade officer, addressed the officers of the Reinforcement. His theme was the duty of looking after our men; and writing after an interval of nearly three years, I find it hard to suggest a parting word more appropriate.

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CHAPTER II

NEW ZEALAND TO LEMNOS

AS was the practice, our Reinforcement of all arms trained into Wellington on the Saturday morning and embarked on the two transports, Nos. 27 and 28, which lay in line alongside the wharf. After dinner on board, we marched through the streets of the city with bayonets fixed. The weather was perfect and the line of march was thronged with people right back to the wharves. The war had assumed a different aspect since the departure of the last Reinforcement. The idea that peace would be signed in the autumn had gone, and the true nature of the grim struggle before us was beginning to show itself more clearly. No longer were our men sailing away on a voyage of Happy Adventure, to return very soon with Minds broadened by acquaintances with other countries and peoples, but were saying good-bye to their loved ones before entering into the Valley of the Shadow. Only a fortnight ago, the first draft of wounded from Gallipoli had landed in Wellington, and not a few of those who watched us march by were mourning for their soldier dead. This could not but be reflected in the send-off the people gave us and perhaps in the manner of our response. We left with no illusions as to the future.

It was not long after all the men had got on board again that the gangways were pulled ashore and we glided out into the stream, where we anchored for the night. We lay there until next morning, although one or two privileged people went on shore on official business. A tremor of the ship at 5 a.m. and we had started on our five weeks' voyage to Suez, via Albany.

We had no definite idea that we were bound for Gallipoli; of course we knew our Main Body was there, but various rumours proposed us for service in Salonika, India, or France, as it suited the imagination of the particular prophet. On the day we left, word had reached New Zealand of the SuvIa Bay fighting on August

8th and on the following days. The death of Lieutenant-Colonel W. G. Malone, the first Commanding Officer of the Wellington Battalion, came as a great shock to us. We heard the casualties were severe, but the people of New Zealand really did not understand how extremely heavy they were until long after the close of the Peninsular Campaign. They were even less prepared than the military authorities for the appalling losses of modern warfare. Lieutenant-Colonel Malone was an interesting figure from my part of the Dominion, Taranaki, and it so happened that I had met him a good deal in our profession, of which he was an active member, in politics and in volunteering. He came to the Dominion as a young man, and was a pioneer in the best sense of the word; a private in the Armed Constabulary, then a farmer in the Bush Country, a business man and eventually a barrister and solicitor. A man of great energy, extraordinary determination, with a gift for detail which was almost a fetish, he left with the Wellington Regiment a spirit of earnest thoroughness easily recognizable as his, even in the two of its three Battalions that were formed months after his death.

Then, and I have never heard that it was unproved on in later days, there was no liaison between the Main Body and its reinforcements in training. We did our best to infuse a Company spirit into the men, but a great opportunity was lost in not treating them at once as units of regiments that had already won honours for their respective colours.

We had the Officer in Command of the Reinforcement, Major Samuel, on board our troopship, with Major Morrison as his Chief of Staff. Major S. S. Allen, of Auckland, was Officer in Command of the ship, and he did me the disservice of taking Brodie as his Regimental Sergeant-Major. The latter's place in the Company was filled by Sergeant Hopkirk, who, with his brother, had been in the Samoan Force. Hopkirk was an excellent fellow, and a great worker; moreover, luckily, he was a good sailor, for I was not, and was a victim until we disembarked at Suez. He got his commission on landing, in France, and was killed on the 1st June, 1916, by a sniper, opposite Wez Macquart. The race is not always to the swift nor the battle to the strong. Hopkirk would have done well in his new profession, but Providence decided he should not endure long.

It was a man's ship with the exception of three nursing sisters, and the misogynists gloried in the atmosphere of quiet on board. We certainly did not quarrel even towards the end of a voyage that was quite uneventful. Some of my Company knew I had tried, without success, in New Zealand to obtain a Tuatara lizard as a Company mascot, and with commendable spirit, as I thought, one of them broke ship at Albany, bringing back with him a very decrepit parrot. Unfortunately, he had to add to his crime next day by going ashore once more to buy dried peas for its sustenance; I fancy he also purchased a certain amount of drink for himself on both occasions. Polly was not popular as a mascot, and after he disappeared, not far from Aden, it was never said he had taken the Company luck with him.

We had a happy day at Albany. The whole Reinforcement marched through the town and was entertained at tea by the Mayor. The weather had been horribly rough in the Australian Bight, and all hands enjoyed the opportunity of stretching their sea legs. It made no attempt to improve until we turned northwards round Cape Leeuwin. With the advent of fine weather came harder work, and in consequence the men were really not very stale when we disembarked at Suez. Syllabi of training were made and strictly adhered to. Naturally some considerable part of the time was devoted to lecturettes by the platoon commanders to their men, and these boys addressed their commands on all sorts of subjects, day after day, with a truly indomitable spirit, and moreover held their attention. I am sure a clergyman would have been a little shy of meeting his congregation so often. We had to cudgel our brains to select topics.

The most important duty was keeping the ship clean, and our Officer in Command of the ship exacted a high standard. However, we were all very keen, as we realized we might be carrying the germs of cerebrospinal meningitis with us, and the discipline was good. As far as I was concerned, there was nothing I liked less than the daily pilgrimage through the parts of the ship where smells had to be fought but generally seemed to win.

The weather gradually became hotter, and the number of men allowed to sleep on decks was increased to a maximum. Before I turned in, I generally strolled round the ship, to find the men lying packed together in all conceivable attitudes on the bare decks, many with nothing but Nature's garments. Most of us are quite dependent for our happiness upon our many modern comforts, but there were these boys on hard boards with no pillows or mattresses, sleeping like babes in their cots. As we had no uniform fit for the tropics, we were allowed to discard part of the service dress, and those officers who had brought flannels with them were happy. For officers the nights were rather trying, owing to the strict regulations forbidding any open doors or portholes through which light could find its way. As it was, messages, anything but congratulatory in tone,

constantly passed between the two ships, calling each other's attention to the presence of telltale gleams. Night after night the darkness shut out the presence of our consort, whom the morning light again revealed. She was a faster boat than the Willochra, and had to abandon her nocturnal gains by dropping astern during the day.

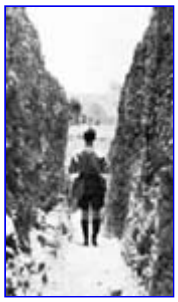
Lieut.-Col. Malone outside his dugout on Quinn's Post (Gallipoli).

Lieut.-Col. Hart, Lieut. A. B. McColl. Major Fletcher. on the Apex, September. 1915.

The hospital and dugout at No. 2 outpost. Gallipoli.

Lieut. Varnham, Major Weston, Lieut. Scott.

The beach at Anzac.



Trench at Gallipoli.

The very uncertainty of the future makes a soldier enjoy the present---*carpe diem* ; and that voyage was very pleasant. The ordered routine of a military regime robs life of its minor worries; our circle was congenial, the food was good and the weather perfect. It is true the latter part of the time was disturbed by the wireless news of the Russian Retreat.

We had indulged in hopes of landing at Colombo, perhaps Bombay or Aden, but all that we realized was to anchor in the Aden roadstead for a few hours awaiting orders.

Here we all received our first grim impression of the realities of war. As we rounded the point we met, also under easy steam, an Indian hospital ship on its way to Bombay. I remember the hush that fell over our transport at the sight of those bandaged figures that lined the bulwarks to watch us pass, and no one ventured to break the silence even by cheering the gallant fellows returning shattered and maimed to their own country.

Suez seemed deserted in comparison with peace times. Our Military Landing Officer wag apparently in sole possession of the railway station, while a company of Indian troops camped in one of the sheds on the wharf.

From him we learned that the 5th Reinforcement had only spent four days in Egypt, but could gather no information as to our own movements. Indeed, the secret was so well kept that, for four days out of the five that we were given in that wonderful old country, we had no idea where or when we should go, or whether as an independent battalion or as reinforcements. The five days, as can be imagined, were very full, what with Training, Inspections and Sight-seeing. Two officers of the Wellington Battalion, I was going to say fresh from Gallipoli, came into the mess while we were at Zeitoun. One of them I had known in New Zealand, and

could realize the effect of the campaign upon him. I never saw anyone in France so pulled down as were the soldiers on Gallipoli; they were simply shadows of themselves. They had been in no better condition in August, and I can never think without a thrill of how, half dead with dysentery, they climbed the steep slopes of Chunuk Bair to fight those terrific battles of the 8th and following days. These two officers were able to give us some idea of how things were with the New Zealand Infantry and Mounted Brigades, which, together with the 4th Australian Infantry Brigade, formed the New Zealand and Australian Division of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (Anzac). I also met a New Zealand doctor who had brought with him a collection of excellent photographs of the strip of land to which the Corps had been clinging. One could imagine Lord Kitchener's and Sir Charles Monro's astonishment at the place when they saw it in November, 1916.

The sea journey from Alexandria to Lemnos gave us our first sensation of submarine dangers, and of a steamer manned by a crew composed of other nationalities than British. It is a trait of the Englishman, his liking to keep everything about him in repair. The first thing one notices on the train from Dover to London is that the streets of the towns are clean, and the houses apparently have all recently been painted. On this particular transport all the door handles and a great many taps seemed to be missing. We had a destroyer escort for part of the way, but did no zigzagging then. Happily the weather was warm and clear, as a good number of the men had to sleep on deck. We were spared any training, and beyond looking after the men's. comfort and meals, as far as they could, the officers had little to do but lie on their chairs basking in the sun.

The sight that met our gaze in Mudros Harbour was certainly a remarkable one. That huge basin was full of ships of all sizes and shapes, belonging to both the Navy and Mercantile Marine, which from one week to another seemed never to leave their moorings. Mudros is a natural harbour measuring some two or three miles across, with good holding ground in from five to seven fathoms of water. Further, two islands in the entrance divide the fairway and make its approaches easier to defend. But beyond a safe anchorage, the harbour offered nothing There were no wharves or docks, and none could be constructed without an immense amount of preparatory dredging. The consequence was the steamers had to act as store-ships until their cargoes were unloaded into other steamers, or into lighters that carried the stores to the Peninsula.

As no accommodation existed on shore, Headquarters lived and had its being on the R.M.S. *Aragon,* a large South American trader. For some reason, in the minds of the troops an idea had formed that the Military Landing Officers and Headquarters were responsible for a shocking waste of money in allowing so many ships to remain idle indefinitely, and if the poor old *Aragon* had sunk peacefully in Mudros Harbour, instead of being torpedoed, as she was many months later, all would have thought Divine Vengeance swift and just.

We arrived in the morning and landed the same evening. Guides from the Brigade met us at the rough landing-place, and a march of about three miles brought us to the camp of the New Zealanders. The old hands crowded round in welcome, and in the darkness, being unable to see the faces of the new arrivals, inquired for them by name. The latter in turn asked after mates, only, in some cases, to receive laconic replies, pathetic in their curtness. B Company, 6th Reinforcement, had merged in the Wellington Battalion of the New Zealand Infantry Brigade.

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CHAPTER III

LEMNOS

LEMNOS and Tenedos stand sentinels over the gates of the Dardanelles. In ancient times the former was sacred to Hephaestus (Vulcan), who, so the legend tells, fell on the island when his father Zeus hurled him headlong from Olympus. Another legend says that Philoctetes was left there by the Greeks, on the way to the Siege of Troy, to nurse his wounded foot in agony for ten years until Ulysses and Neoptolemus induced him to accompany them. He lived beside Mount Hermaeus, one of the beacon points that flashed home to Argos the news of Troy's downfall. The Minyae, the inhabitants of the island, sent wine and provisions to the Greeks before Troy. In those days Myrina (modern Kastro) on the west, and Hephaestra on the east, were its two cities. A deserted place called Palaeo Kastro marks the site of Hephaestra, which no doubt owing to its eastern situation was the first to be attacked by Miltiades, the Tyrant of Thracian Chersonese (Gallipoli). It quickly fell, but Kastro, with its strong citadel built on a perpendicular rock, sustained a siege. After its

conquest by Miltiades, Lemnos secured to Athens her trade on the Black Sea. With the fortune of war the dominion of the island thereafter passed through Macedonian, Roman, Greek, Italian and Turkish hands. eventually returning to Greece after the second Balkan War of 1913. Its area is approximately 150 square miles and its population before the Great War was said to be 30,000 Greeks and 5,000 Turks, the latter including political offenders, for, during many years, the island was Turkey's place of banishment. Statistics say 20,000 sheep were its total livestock, which will give a good idea of its poverty. The valleys were cultivated, but the hills were neglected and produced nothing.

From a military standpoint, Lemnos was on the Lines of Communication to Gallipoli, and accordingly was under naval command. The Division had no base there, and on its arrival in September from the Peninsula, for a few weeks' rest, found no comfortable quarters awaiting it. The camp had been pitched on the northern slope of the west inside of Mudros Harbour, at a place called Sarpi, and a bleaker and more inhospitable spot I find it hard to picture. For tents and camp material of any kind, Brigades had to rely upon the generosity of Lines of Communication, who had little enough to distribute. In consequence not very much could be done for the comfort of the men. Not that it mattered for new arrivals, but the Peninsula men needed everything that could be given them. The area held at Anzac was so limited that the troops were really never out of the firing line, and the Division had had no rest since the fighting at the beginning of August; moreover, the heavy casualties had so reduced their numbers that those left had to do extra work to both occupy and improve the trenches. Dysentery, too, had played havoc with them, and they looked like famine victims alongside the reinforcements. What a toll wounds and disease had taken can be seen from the fact that out of neatly 2,000 of all ranks of the Battalion that had landed on the Dardanelles since April 25th, 13 officers and 212 other ranks alone returned to Lemnos in September, and, as can be easily understood, the evacuations to hospital continued to be heavy. Still, in spite of the lack of comfort and of the keen autumn winds that swept Lemnos, the old hands were glad enough of the spell, and after a few weeks hardly knew themselves. I remember well one man in my Company who, I was told, had done excellent work on Gallipoli and although he was in a really low state of health refused to "go sick." He was beginning to lose faith in his recovery, when Company Sergeant-Major Wood (who was destined afterwards to add considerably to the distinction he had already earned), succeeded with his usual sympathetic instinct in persuading him that to take more interest in his diet would work a certain cure. With much faith in Wood's medical skill, he carried out the treatment most conscientiously, and some days after Wood escorted me to the man's little "bivvy," built alongside one of the three marquees the Company possessed, to witness the tempting sight of a roast fowl and two vegetables being dished up, cooked by him in an earth oven near by. His menus, thanks to Wood, had become a hobby, giving him an added lease of life. I was sorry we were not able to take him with us on the 8th November, 1915, but he was classed B and left behind.

On the death of Lieutenant-Colonel Malone, Major W. H. Fletcher took over the command of the Battalion temporarily, until Lieutenant-Colonel H. Hart, D.S.O., arrived from England in the beginning of September. The latter had been severely wounded shortly after the landing in April and had been invalided to England. He left New Zealand with the Main Body as second in command, and earned his decoration at the landing. His adjutant was Lieutenant A. B. McColl.

Lieutenant-Colonel Hart gave me the command of the Taranaki (C) Company, a command that I had the fortune to retain, with a few weeks' exception, until December, 1916; a long time as time goes in this war. The Company represented in the Battalion the 11th Taranaki Rifles Regiment, which wears on its badge the honours "Waireka" and "South Africa." The fathers and grandfathers of the present generation of that very attractive and flourishing Province of New Zealand had fought for their footing in the country in the Sixties, and probably that struggle left an imprint on them that was passed down by inheritance to their children. When I took over, a Company Tradition was in existence, which we all guarded most zealously, secretly hoping to hand it on with added lustre. The strict theory is that the only man in the Army who actually commands men is the Section Leader; the Platoon Commander has four Section Leaders under him, while the Company Commander directs four Platoon Commanders, and so on to the Commander in Chief. In practice, however, the Commander of a Company is very near to his men, and he has the happiness of having them about him and their being dependent upon him. There is no better job in the British Army than that of a Company Commander, and I wished for no finer Company than mine.

Neither the Mounted Brigade nor ourselves were given many idle moments; for a rest on active service is another name for training, which some zealous Commanders endeavour to make more and more intensive. Barren Lemnos, with its unfenced rolling country, was an ideal manœuvre ground on which Corps could have

been handled with case, and so mimic battles were fought by night as well as by day. As the mounted men had no horses with them, all their mounts having been left behind at Cairo, they did their work on foot. At off times a certain amount of boating on the Harbour was enjoyed by the men, whose endeavour was to board newly-arrived ships for tinned fruit and fish, chocolate, etc.

One afternoon, a week or two after we joined the Battalion, I received orders to report at Brigade at 4 p.m. with 12 picked men carrying 48 hours' rations. With suppressed excitement I got my team together, surmising some special duty on the Peninsula, to which everyone seemed to know we were returning. However, at Headquarters, I learned that my mission was to take charge of my party and a similar one provided by the First Australian Division, in order to police the town of Kastro, the capital of the island.

Kastro boasted in pre-war days of a population of 4,000 Greeks and 800 Turks, and possessed an excellent harbour, through which passed the principal part of the island's trade. It seemed that some of the troops had been treating that charming spot as a week-end resort, and their efforts to throw aside memories of battle had rather disturbed the Greek population. That week at Kastro was the brightest part of my time on Lemnos. Lieutenant-Colonel Fortescue provided a comfortable house for the Posse, while my quarters were in an adjoining hotel, whose Greek proprietor had made a small fortune in America. The historic old fortress, in which were some guns cast in the time of Philip II. of Spain, overlooked the town from its rocky pinnacle, and in imagination one reconstructed its unsuccessful defence against the Turks by a Venetian garrison for sixty-three days in 1657. Below the rock was a beach of yellow sand from which we bathed and fished. Kastro was a quaint old place, and another legend has it that in ancient times the shadow of Mount Athos, forty miles away, fell at sunset upon a bronze cow in the market-place. The Greek shopkeepers had asked for our protection, for, while pleased to see their wines and spirits consumed in quantity by soldier customers, they shrank from the effects of such libations. In my official capacity, I called on the Greek Military Governor, a young man, but a veteran of the last two Balkan Wars. Turkish delight, which came from one of the other Egean Islands, coffee and liqueurs, formed his afternoon hospitality, and during our week's tour of duty we were all much indebted to the British Naval Representative at Kastro, who was a native of Cyprus where he had held a position in the Police.

We had one exciting afternoon, being summoned to a neighbouring village by the local priest, who appealed for our help through the Archbishop of Kastro. The complaint was that some soldiers had taken up their residence in the village and were terrorizing the inhabitants. We made a forced march and deported. the men, who, though drunk, seemed peaceable enough. The priest was there at the head of his flock, and called down blessings on our heads, but one of the deportees, on the way out, informed my sergeant that they had incurred his displeasure by refusing to buy very indifferent cognac from him behind the back of the innkeeper. We ended our tour of duty by a pleasant march back to camp, stopping on the summit to bathe in the hot mineral springs and to eat the customary meal of fried eggs, coffee, brown bread, butter and honey.

No word had come of the Division moving, and training pursued its course. Between our camp and the landing-place were British, Canadian and Australian hospitals, some in tents and some in huts. Their people were very kind and hospitable to us, and all we could do in return was to invite them to our cricket and football matches played on the rough ground, originally laid out on the mudflats by the Navy, and to our campfire concerts on Sarpi Hill. These hospitals had endured great hardships since the day they landed on Lemnos, and their history went hand-in-hand with that of the Gallipoli Campaign.

While on Lemnos the Division was inspected by Sir Charles Monro, then engaged in the examination of the actual conditions on the spot, that formed the basis of his report advising the Evacuation of the Dardanelles.

On the 6th November we received orders to re-embark for the Peninsula, and it was a bright, sunny morning (November 8th) on which we fell in with full kit and marched again down to the landing-stage, through the streets of the hospitals. All the medicos and their staffs turned out to give us a sendoff, and with their good wishes in our ears we filed on board the transport.

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CHAPTER IV

GALLIPOLI

THE transport that took Brigade Headquarters, the Canterbury Battalion (Lieutenant-Colonel R. Young, C.M.G., D.S.O.) and ourselves to the Peninsula was the one in which we had come from Alexandria, and her departure was so timed that she arrived off Anzac in darkness. We had dinner on board, and, in the crowded saloon, I had my first experience of that feeling of tension that is abroad on the eve of action. There is no mistaking it; it is more tangible than a feeling of hostility or of goodwill in an audience, perhaps because a greater proportion of those present are affected.

It was a calm, star-lit night with no moon, and when the steamer lost her way in the smooth waters off Gaba Tepe, one was ,allowed to step out on to the deck and take in an impression of that extraordinary place; for, throughout, it was the extraordinary character of the enterprise that was so striking. The August fighting had extended the British holding a little inland and northwards to include Suvla Bay, but looking at the high shapes of the hills from the ship we could not see as far as Suvla, and, even more so than in the daylight, it looked as if we were hanging on to a precipice with our backs to the sea. The line of the opposing trenches was shown by the flashes of the rifles as all night the crack, crack went on from one end to the other. Up against the face of the cliff glimmered innumerable lights, like glow-worms, from the dug-outs of the Australians. It reminded me very much of anchoring off the mines at Puysegur Point in the South Island of New Zealand.

During the time I was on the Peninsula we were spared the pleasure of regular Artillery Night Firing, an abomination which the British invented at the Battle of the Somme, and in consequence our only risk in landing by the lighters, on this occasion, was from dropping bullets. My Company got ashore with the loss of one man wounded in the throat. The Battalion mustered on the beach, and, headed by the Commanding Officer and a guide provided by the Brigade Advance Party, we marched northwards along the sand to a point at which we turned up to Watercourse Gully. The Company was so weak that, with Lieutenant- Colonel Hart's permission, I had reorganized it into two Platoons, Nos. 9 and 12, under the command of Lieutenant R. F. C. Scott and Second Lieutenant F. S. Varnham respectively. Quartermaster-Sergeant A. R. McIsaac was with the Company until the 26th November, 1915, when he was appointed Regimental Quartermaster-Sergeant, and Company Sergeant-Major Wood took his position and Sergeant G. Bertrand became Company Sergeant-Major. Lance-Corporal R. Quilliam was Company Clerk.

We picnicked there for the rest of the night in little bivvys dug out of the sandhills, and two days after relieved the 25th Australian Battalion on the Apex. The Auckland Battalion held Rhododendron Spur on our right and the Canterbury Battalion, Cheshire Ridge on our left, Otago Battalion being in reserve down the Dere below Brigade Headquarters. The 4th Australian Brigade was on the right of our Brigade and the New Zealand Mounted Brigade on the left. A few days after we landed, Brigadier-General F. E. Johnston, C.B., had to go back to Egypt, and until his return the Brigade was commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel W. G. Braithwaite, C.M.G., D.S.O., Royal Welsh Fusiliers, who was granted the temporary rank of Colonel. Colonel Braithwaite had been Major-General Sir Alexander Godley's Divisional Chief of Staff, and later, as Commander of the Second New Zealand Brigade, that was formed in Egypt in March, 1916, was one of our most striking personalities. There were more stories of General "Bill" in the New Zealand Division than of anyone, although I cannot recollect a touch of malice in one of them.

About the middle of the Apex, our trenches were some forty yards from the Turkish Blockhouse situated on the little neck of land that connected the Rhododendron, Apex and Cheshire Ridges with the higher slopes of Chunuk Bair. The Brigade reached the summit of that mountain in August, and some of our dead lay on the Straits side of it, but the Apex represented the furthest point that was subsequently held. And there we remained for six weeks until the evacuation in December, half way up the side of a steep hill and not more than two miles from a harbourless beach upon which stores and munitions were landed at night, and then only in calm weather and by the grace of the submarines. One's inclination is always to believe the story that Lord Kitchener's first exclamation upon landing on Anzac beach was, "Good God Almighty." Our Divisional Batteries were situated on the beach and looked for support from the guns of two or three destroyers that steamed up and down day and night. From the beach to the Apex a clay track wandered up the Dere, along which the wonderful mules with their Indian masters brought our water, food and munitions. This track in wet weather became a slippery quagmire. To anyone with imagination, the blizzard of the end of November was unnecessary to teach us our dependence upon the chances of a fine winter.

While the Division was on Lemnos, the relieving Australians had done great work on the Apex, and we found trenches dug deep in the chalky gravel and fairly good fine-weather dug-outs. All around the Apex lay the

unburied dead of the August battles : Ghurkas, Welshmen, Englishmen and our own. In one look-out corner in the front line, the sentry at night rested his elbows ,on the grave of a fellow-countryman whose remains lay in the parapet itself.

My little cabin was the best in the Company Sector and consisted of a hole, 4 feet by 2 feet 6 inches,. driven 6 feet into the side of the trench, and in it one slept, made one's toilette and transacted the Company business. I purposely refrain from any reference to dressing because one never undressed ; the water for shaving and the daily wash was limited to what could be contained in a blue enamel coffee mug.

I cannot say that I enjoyed the few weeks we were on the Peninsula, because a gastroenteritis that I had developed on the transport in the Tropics remained with me until we left for France in April, 1916, and good health, necessary to happiness at all times, is vital on active service. But I want to protect myself from any suspicion of complaint against the conditions under which we lived. Lack of exercise one certainly felt, but custom soon restored the balance as far as everything else was concerned, and it was a fact that some dugouts, all of which were excellent, were better than others. In any case I am sure the Headquarters dug-out in the Company Sector, opposite the Blockhouse was better than many others because of the glorious view it possessed from its trench---a view that embraced, on the south, Imbros, the red marble mass of Samothrace, Suvla Bay, part of the Gulf of Xeros and Anafarta. The sunrises and sunsets in the eastern Mediterranean were indescribably beautiful. The work of man were the graceful hospital ships in the Bight and the destroyers ceaselessly gliding up and down like caged panthers. At intervals they stopped for their "hates," when we could actually pick up the shells with our eyes as they forged their way through the air, up the Dere close over our heads, to burst in the Turkish trenches a few yards away.

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<tr><td>Turkish shell exploding, fired at steamer on beach.</td><td>Loading mules at Gallipoli.</td></tr>
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2nd Battalion's original transport.	View in Ismailia Gardens.

The weather had been clear and warm for the first week or two, and so the blizzard, which we all agreed came direct from the steppes of Russia, wherever they are, caught us unprepared. The snow and wind were the coldest we had ever known, and our Otago men, who can speak with authority, agreed. But being on a hillside we were not cursed with the dire effects of the rain, which played such havoc with the troops, British and Turks alike, at Suvla Bay, and our evacuations were few. In those sectors the trenches themselves became raging torrents, and the men, drenched as they were, suffered disastrously from the blizzard that followed. There were actually 200 deaths from drowning and exposure, and more than 10,000 evacuated "sick." Besides the loss of lives, the storm did considerable damage to the flimsy wharves on the beach, and many of the lighters, so important to our well-being, were damaged or destroyed. It was a warning not to be disregarded of the danger of attempting to maintain and supply a Force operating on a Coast with no Harbour.

It must be that hardships shared by men in a body bring out the best in them, for they all faced the cold with a resource and endurance that was beyond praise. Part of the Company (No. 12 Platoon) was in the front trenches at the time, and the remainder (No. 9 Platoon) in support a little way down the Dere near the Quartermaster's stores and cookhouses. The dug-outs there were poor, and many of the men slept in their blankets with merely a waterproof sheet as protection against the snow banked up around them. We had to go on stricter water allowance and rations for the time being, as the mules, slipping and staggering on the wet clay, could not carry the full loads. The Taranaki Company were fortunate in their cooks, who, in spite of the circumstances, were always punctual with the meals and kept the men supplied with hot soup or tea, that helped resistance to the bitter cold.

Of course from the point of view of casualties, the Apex for those six weeks was a home, as the men say. A few rounds of shrapnel and at rare intervals one or two misdirected bombs during the day, and some rifle and machine-gun fire at night, was the sum total of the enemy's offending. We had some antiquated trench mortars heroically served by men who at every discharge ran the risk of being blown to pieces, and a good number of still more out-of-date hand-grenades. The exception was a Japanese trench mortar, of which we were very proud, and which must have frightened seven bells out of the Turks. There were some who declared they could hear cries of "Allah! Allah!" from their trenches after the bomb exploded, as it did, with a terrific bang. Towards the end we heard the Turks were introducing batteries of Austrian howitzers, and it may be that it was some of those new guns that did such terrible execution on the Australians one afternoon when effecting a relief in the Lone Pine trenches, and that shelled the Rhododendron Ridge on the 19th December. I believe, after the evacuation, an Austrian paper came into General Godley's hand with a description of an Observing Officer from a battery that had been installed the day before behind Anafarta, who, going into his post the morning after the evacuation, found all his anticipated targets had gone.

There can be no great disagreement on the point that we evacuated the Peninsula just in time. There is no doubt it was an impossible position. We could not go forward, so we had to go out. And with Austrian howitzers, together with winter at hand, there was no need to stand upon ceremony as to our going.

Some time before the actual evacuation, rumours reached us from the Beach, whence all rumours came, that it was contemplated. Senior Officers strenuously denied them, but evidence of stores, and especially rum, being destroyed, and mules and guns being shipped away, proved too strong, and eventually we were all let into the secret. In accordance, however, with Sir Charles Monro's plans, we carried out our usual daily routine---except that at odd intervals, both by day and night, every gun and rifle in the Sector was quiet for some two or three hours, so that, when our last thin line of sentries would file out of the deserted trenches and

slip down the Dere to the waiting lighters, the Turks' suspicions would not be awakened by the silence that must follow their departure.

It had the luck that every plan as well designed and executed deserves. The weather was its fortunate part, indeed the Keystone---absolutely calm moonlight nights, with a heavy fog in the early hours of the morning. Even a light breeze from the south or south-west would have raised a ground swell that would have interfered with communication with the Beach, while anything approaching a gale from those quarters would have necessitated a postponement of all operations for the time being. At no time did I think it was a scheme that ran any great risk of failure from active opposition on the Turks' part, and similar operations in France have served to confirm this, but nevertheless it was well done.

There was no preliminary retirement to inner lines, although General Birdwood had prepared a small Keep on Walker's Ridge, nearer the Beach, to cover the withdrawal of the rearmost parties, if necessary. The Reserve Companies departed on the 18th, and those holding the trenches on the following night. The latter were divided into three parties, and embarked in order at the times appointed. Soon after nightfall the covering ships were on their stations and the withdrawal began. At 1.30 a.m. the rearmost parties were leaving the front trenches at Suvla Bay and on the left of Anzac. On the right of Anzac, where the lines drew nearer to the sea, the last defenders remained until 2 a.m. By 5.30 a.m. the evacuation was complete. The Naval arrangements were good, and we simply marched down the Dere on to the lighters, waiting at the Anzac Pier, from which we transhipped to small steamers that took us to Lemnos. We had the airmen to keep any spying hostile planes away, and I recollect pacing up and down the trench in the moonlight waiting my turn to go, and watching our plane doing sentry-go overhead. Practically all stores were systematically destroyed before we disembarked, and, thanks to an organized enthusiasm, the Artillery left no guns behind of any value. Those actually left at Anzac were four 18-pounders, two 5-inch howitzers, one 4.7-inch naval gun, one anti-aircraft and two 3-pounder Hotchkiss guns, but they were destroyed before the final embarkation. Much to the sorrow of their Indian grooms, fifty-six mules had to be abandoned, with a number of wheelless carts and some supplies that were set on fire.

As it was impossible to dispose of the bombs, flares, small arms ammunition and trench stores in any other way, they were buried in large holes, dug in the places where spoil from the mine tunnels was dumped. The hole my Company dug, I imagined, was rather like the one dug by Captain Flint on Treasure Island, in which he stored his gold bars and pieces of eight.

We were glad to see each other when we met once more on Lemnos. Our passage there was marked by our first civilized breakfast on board a large steamer in Mudros, upon which part of the Brigade was dumped for a few hours. Is it that our primitive instincts are the strongest ? To be hungry and to eat, to be thirsty and to drink, are they the keenest pleasures, after all ?

This time we were camped on the east side of Mudros Harbour, near a village in which were some French troops. They seemed an elderly stamp of men. A day or two after our arrival some Senegalese joined them from Camp Helles, and our men were much interested in their kit and elaborate cooking arrangements. We commenced training, but not for long, as the day before Christmas some of the Battalion embarked for Egypt, and with them went Scott and Varnham. This left Lieutenant Kibblewhite and myself in possession of the tent, and, rather disconsolately, he and I walked into the village on Christmas Eve to make our purchases for the morrow's dinner. We were mighty thankful, however, when we received orders early in the morning to move, and still more so when we found ourselves on board the S.S. Simla. It was a day of joy unalloyed, with comfortable quarters, a real Christmas dinner, and the men fed just as well as the officers. The troops on board were mostly Australians, and they very kindly shared their gift plum-puddings with us. The feeling between the Australians and ourselves has always been excellent, and I can remember on the Apex hearing the older hands, in their dug-outs close by mine, expatiating on the virtues of the 4th Australian Brigade that had fought alongside them. Although they were proud to have a complete New Zealand Division, the Peninsula veterans sincerely regretted the parting with the Australians necessitated by its formation later.

The voyage back to Alexandria was without incident. We had no destroyer escort, and did not zigzag, and moreover were told we had to trust to the ship's speed and her two guns. We hoped the gunners were good shots, as we knew the ship was not exactly an ocean racehorse. The Military Landing Officers kept us waiting in harbour for twenty-four hours., and we then entrained for Ismailia, where we were to make our home for the next three months.

Chapter Five
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